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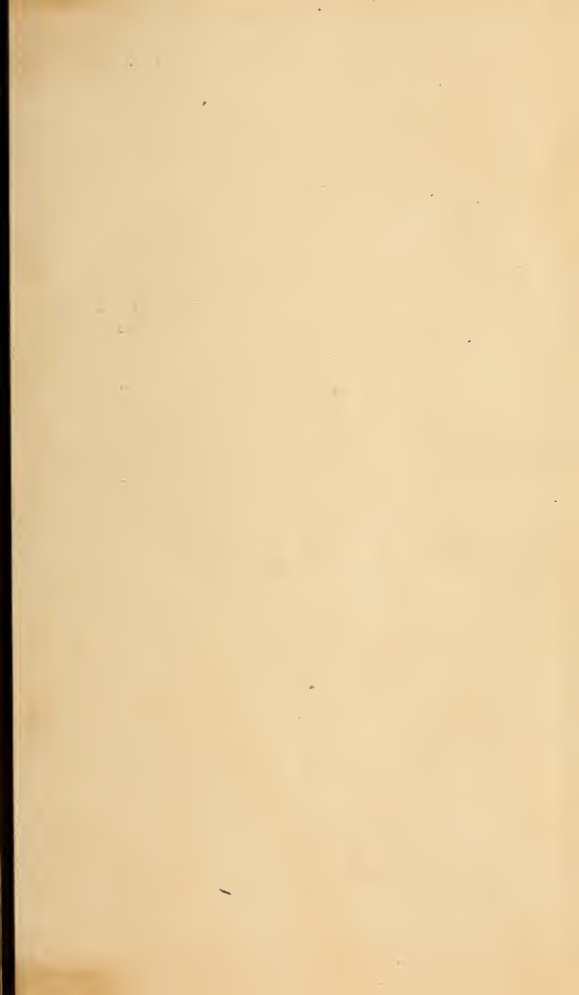


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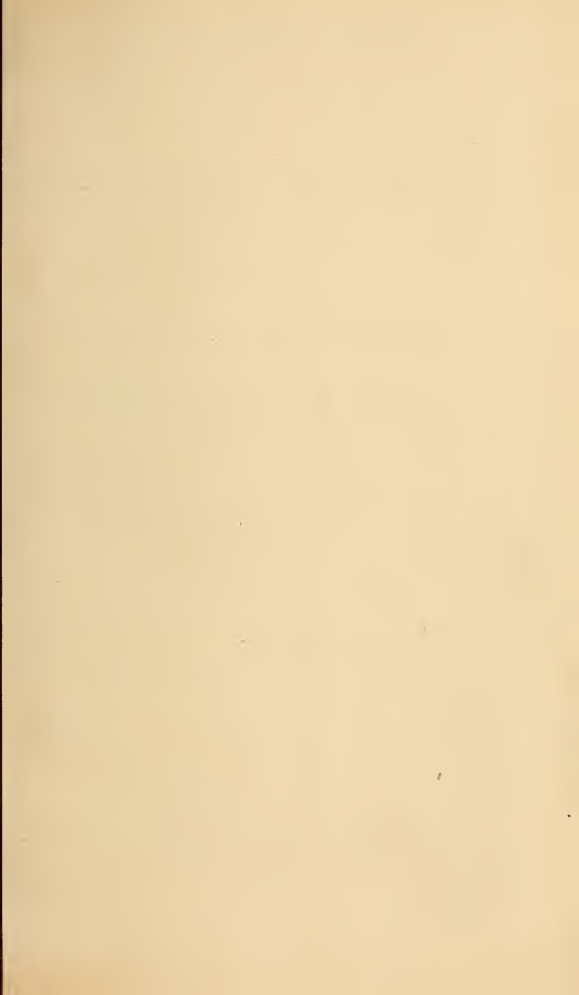
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.







UGHT CHRISTIANS

TO

DRINK WINE?

A DISCOURSE,

PREACHED IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, FREDONIA, N. Y.,
September 9th, 1866,

BY HOWARD M. JONES,
Pastor of the Congregation

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ger connected with the habit of drinking wine, has long been acknowledged among Christians; and this, together with the fact that pure wines are almost unknown in this country, has led most of Christ's professed followers to exclude this beverage from their tables. Recently, however, with the increase of native wines, it has been urged that the pure juice of the grape, used as a substitute for the distilled and poisonous liquors now common, will promote the cause of temperance, rather than hinder it. And the practical question is now before us: Shall I or shall I not, as a disciple of Christ, countenance the use of wine as a beverage? It is the object of this discourse to help you solve this question, in the light of that new affection which I trust has been implanted within you by the Spirit of God. I appeal to you as to those whose controlling motive is the love of Jesus. With the Christian, the question should be, not, how far can I go in self-indulgence? but, How far can I honor my Savior by cheerful self-denial?

In order to a practical solution of this wine question, it is not necessary to enter into a labored investigation into Hebrew etymology.

It is sufficient to ascertain the ordinary usage respecting the principal words translated wine in our Bibles, and thence decide upon our duty in the premises.

It is well to remember, however, in the outset, that from what we know of the effects of wine-drinking, there is a strong presumption against it. We will therefore examine the arguments in favor of wine, before offering the positive reasons for total abstinence.

It is said, first, that wine is spoken of with approval in the Scriptures, and that therefore we may innocently use it as a beverage. As is well known, there are various Hebrew words which in our version are translated wine. Of these, however, only two, *tirosch* and *yāyin*, are used with considerable frequency. *Tirosch*, it has been satisfactorily shown, does not properly denote wine of any kind. It is most frequently found associated with words translated corn and oil, but which really denote in general terms the produce of the field, (*dagan*;) and produce of the orchard (*yitshar*). Thus the three signify comprehensively, the produce of the field, vineyard and orchard.— There are other words to denote the bread,

wine and oil manufactured from them; and the natural product and the manufactured article are sometimes distinguished from each other by the use of these very words. The tithes were to be paid of the *dagan*, *tirosh* and *yitzhar*, the grain, vine-fruit and orchard-fruit, thus embracing everything the farmer would raise. *Yitzhar* embraces not only oil, the produce of the olive tree, but also the fresh olive, the fig, the date, the pomegranate and the citron; *dagan* includes grain of all kinds; and *tirosh* the grape, whether fresh or dried or pressed. *Tirosh* occurs in the Bible 38 times; of these, it occurs 32 times in connection with *dagan* or *yitzhar*, or both, clearly denoting the product of the vine in its natural state. In Judges, IX. 13, it occurs alone; the vine said, "shall I leave my *tirosh*, (*i. e.*, fruit, not wine,) which cheereth God and man?" In other passages, as in Micah, VI. 15, *tirosh* denotes the grapes put into the vat for making wine. "Thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and the *tirosh*, (grapes, not sweet wine as our version has it,) but shall not drink the wine." This translation fully preserves the parallelism

which the other does not. So where the presses are described as overflowing or bursting with *tirosh*, the grapes are intended, not the liquid, which instead of overflowing the press-vat runs out into another vessel. Besides we have a distinct word, *ausis*, to denote the must or freshly expressed juice. It is worthy of remark also, that *tirosh* is never described as put into jars, or cups, or bottles, as would be natural, were it a liquid. In only one place is it mentioned as something to drink; in the 62d of Isaiah. There it is connected with *dagan*, corn, as expressive of the entire satisfaction of the appetite; "they shall eat the corn and drink the grape," i. e., not these articles themselves, but the bread made from the one and the wine expressed from the other. Even Gesenius, who usually adheres to the old interpretation of the word, here assigns to it the very meaning now claimed for it, grape-fruit. The grape has always been one of the staple productions of Syria, and has a great variety of uses. Multitudes of grapes are eaten fresh or dried into raisins.—The grape furnishes the people with preserves, pickles, sugar, vinegar and molasses. The

green grapes are dried to furnish the basis of a pleasant, cooling drink like lemonade; a beverage is also made from raisins. *Dibs*, a thick molasses, almost a candy, made from grapes is very abundant; in some places much more so than wine. Dr. Eli Smith, a veteran missionary of Syria, than whom no one has had a better opportunity of judging, says, "Wine is not the most important, but rather the least so, of all the objects for which the vine is cultivated;" and again, writing of the vineyards of Bhamdun, "the wine made is an item of no consideration."

It will be seen from this examination, that the commendation of *tirosh*, is merely a commendation of the grape, not of fermented wine.

Yayin, the other Hebrew word, undoubtedly signifies wine. It is a generic term, and does not indicate by itself the kind of wine referred to, but like our corresponding English word usually denotes the fermented juice of the grape; yet by no means universally. Like the Greek *oinos* and the Latin *vinum*, it had a somewhat wider range than our English word. It is sometimes put for *ausis*, must, sometimes for *tirosh*, wine fruit, sometimes

even for the wine itself. Whenever it is mentioned as being tithed for the service of the sanctuary, we must understand it as equivalent to *tirosh*; for the tithe, at least in Old Testament times, was laid upon the raw material, not upon the manufactured article. *Yayin* is mentioned as a common beverage; it formed part of the temple-stores; its use was not positively forbidden except to the priests and Nazarites. But to argue from the mere historical circumstance, that God regards fermented wine as a blessing and desires us to use it freely, is to leap to a conclusion entirely unwarranted. So far as I can see, there are but few passages where the use of *yayin* is apparently commended. In the 104th Psalm, it is said to be given by the Lord, and to make glad the heart of man; God, however, strictly speaking, does not give fermented wine, but the fresh juice in the grape; and the mirth that is generated over the wine-cup, is far removed from the gladness which belongs to the devout worshipper of God. We must believe then that *yayin* here stands for *tirosh*, grape-produce, and we can do this the more readily, seeing it is connected with bread and oil, denoting the two other kinds of natural produce. If we believe on the authority of

this passage that God intended fermented wine for a beverage, we must on the same authority believe that he would have us besmear our faces with oil. The whole passage is merely an expression of gratitude to God for the kindly fruits of the earth. The passage in Deut. XIV, also proves too much. The Jews are there told to bestow their money "for wine or strong drink, or whatsoever their soul lusted after." Surely we are not to believe that God commended strong drink, or gave his people unlimited license. Then we need not believe that he here commends wine.—There remains only the passage in Proverbs XXXI, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto him that is of a heavy heart." If this language be read in its connection, it will be seen that the whole passage is against the use of wine. Kings are not to drink wine, lest they forget the law, and pervert judgment. If wine is to be used at all, give it as a tonic to the distressed or a stimulant to those who are ready to perish.—It is said that there are 24 passages in which *yayin* is apparently commended, out of 140 in which the word occurs: whereas in more than 70 it is mentioned with strong disapproval.—Since it does not always mean fermented wine,

may we not believe that it never does when mentioned approvingly.

If the views presented be correct, the Old Testament is far less favorable to wine than is sometimes believed. It does not enjoin total abstinence, but it abounds in cautions against the intoxicating cup. We read of Samson, Samuel, Daniel and John the Baptist, that they took no wine whatever. Total abstinence was required of priests, Nazarites and Rechabites. The entire nation during the 40 years in the wilderness drank no wine, and the reason is assigned by Jehovah: "that ye might know that I am the Lord your God." When God fed the nation, he gave them no wine to exhilarate them in their desert journey. He might have done so, but his name was glorified without the use of such a beverage.

But if the Old Testament allowed the moderate use of wine, it by no means follows that we should drink it. Moses, as a civil ruler, allowed slavery, polygamy, divorce, blood-revenge, on account of the hardness of the Jewish heart. Knowing that he could not absolutely prevent these things, he regulated them, and endeavored to check their worst forms. But some of these things our Savior forbade altogether, and others, such as slave-

ry, are being destroyed by the power of his cross. Dancing was permitted in the old dispensation as a religious service. It does not follow that christians at the present day should indulge in it as a social amusement.— No more does it follow that we should have our wine-cellars and sparkling decanters, because David and Solomon laid in their stores of wine. We live in an age, in some respects far more enlightened than theirs; in an age of fewer outward restraints; of more wide and rapidly spreading temptations, and when our rule is the Gospel law of love. Distilled liquors were then unknown: now they are the almost inevitable successors of wine. Even unbelievers are willing to abstain from so dangerous a beverage for the good of society. And can christians do less?

But it is said that Christ countenanced wine by himself partaking of it. We have no *evidence* that he did so. He was called a wine-drinker, (the Greek word means simply that, not toper,) but it was by the same foes who falsely accused him of gluttony. Their testimony is worthless. But he turned water into wine at Cana. This is appealed to as an unanswerable argument. But since the Greek word *oinos*, like the Hebrew *yayin*, does not de-

note exclusively intoxicating wine, it may not in this instance; indeed, I think we may go farther, and say that it cannot. Can we believe that He who was in all things a pattern of self-denial, and who required his disciples to crucify the flesh, that Christ, were he now upon earth, would furnish of his own free will a hundred gallons of alcoholic wine to a wedding party, who had already drunk largely of the same intoxicating beverage? We cannot for a moment reconcile such a thought with our Lord's character; hence we must believe the wine referred to, to be unfermented. So evidently thought the learned Augustine, who lived much nearer than we to our Savior's own time. He writes, "He who made the wine at this wedding, does the same thing every year in the vines. Just as the water in the water-pots was turned into wine by the Lord, so that which the clouds pour down from Heaven, is turned into wine by the same Lord." Again, it is said that at the supper established by our Savior for his disciples, fermented wine is one of the elements. This is by no means clear. The supper was instituted in connection with the Jewish Passover, where everything fermented was carefully excluded by the law of Moses. We have no rea-

son to believe that our Savior departed from that law, although the Jews of a later age are said to have used fermented wines. The Talmud in such a matter is poor authority against the Pentateuch.

It is passing strange that Paul's advice to Timothy should ever have been quoted in favor of the use of wine as a beverage. It is plain from the language used that Timothy believed in total abstinence; nay, went so far that he would not use wine as a medicine.— And Paul told him that he needed a little sometimes, to relieve his indigestion. The ordinary rule for bishops, is that they be not given to wine (*Gr. paroinos*). Some have construed this to mean that they might drink it moderately, if not *given* to it. But the Greek will not bear that construction. It means literally "with wine," or "in the company of wine," and refers to social drinking. A bishop or pastor must not countenance the social glass, by his presence where it is passed.

So much for the direct Scripture argument. But aside from this, it is argued that wine is one of the good things of God, intended for our use, and to be received as such with thankfulness. Of this there is no doubt. In a certain sense, all things are good. Thorns

and thistles doubtless have their use. It does not follow that we should plant them in our gardens. Tobacco is not an unmingled curse. It does not follow that we ought to defile our mouths with it daily. Arsenic and strychnine have their uses. It does not follow that we are to make a beverage of them. No more does it follow from the existence of fermented wine, that God meant it for a beverage. One might almost as well say that decayed meat or vegetables were intended for our sustenance. The fermentation of wine is to the chemist only another name for putrefaction. A chemical change takes place which destroys, or at least greatly impairs its nutritive character. It has probably medicinal uses, but is not to be classed among the things intended for our sustenance or refreshment, any more than a decayed apple or potato.

Having replied to these various objections, let me advert to the positive arguments for total abstinence from wine: In the first place, it is to be considered that even the manufacture of native wine will not prevent adulteration. It cannot be made so cheaply that water, combined with alcohol and other poisons will not cheapen it. When pure wine could be furnished in Italy at one cent a bottle, re-

tailers chose to gain a fraction of profit by the admission of water or drugs; such is the language of Greenough, the sculptor, who resided many years in Florence. The Catawba wine of trade is adulterated. The simple fermented juice of the grape is not to be had in the market. The old argument then from the adulteration of wine is still a good one, and will remain a sufficient reason for total abstinence, until that millenium arrives when dishonesty shall cease.

The chief reason, however, why the Christian should not countenance the use of wine, is, that with wine-drinking intemperance usually commences. The temperate man usually has no relish for whiskey. The enemy cannot reach him by that avenue. The strong temptation is when the sparkling cup of wine is passed, by fair hands perhaps, in some brilliant social circle. It is hard under such circumstances to say no, hard to withstand the fascination, or provoke the ridicule of a pleasant evening party. O, that those ladies who set the wine-glass and the decanter on their tables, could lift for a moment the veil of futurity, and see those young men whom they are enticing to their ruin, filling a drunkard's dishonored grave, and hear the bitter re-

proaches of those men—In *your parlor*, I took the first step in the road to ruin. Young *men*, did I say? Would that that were all. Many of the elegant ladies, whose summers have hitherto been spent at Newport and Saratoga, are now at an asylum for inebriates. Girls of 18, daughters of the most respectable merchants of New York, have been seen grossly intoxicated in Broadway. Fashionable drinking is as common among women as it used to be among men. And this begins, as we well know, in drinking wine. Shall the force of our example, fellow-Christians, be given to sustain a practice leading to results so fearful? Dare we even tamper with our own appetites in this direction? We think there is no danger, but we know not the tiger fury of insatiable appetite, when once aroused. Our only safety is in banishing the wine-cup from our tables altogether; the only safety for ourselves or for the community wherein we dwell. Can one enter the rapids, and be in no danger of going over the cataract? “Can one take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?” Suppose, however, I have so great self-control, or so little taste for liquor, that I can drink moderately of pure wine without any sensible evil effects to myself, without culti-

vating a taste for stronger potations; the effect of our example upon others is still to be considered, at least by the professed Christian. The glass of wine that does not injure me, may awaken in another, an insatiable thirst for stimulating drinks. The natural effect of every alcoholic beverage, after the exhilaration is over, is to awaken a demand for more. And when I speak of an alcoholic beverage, it is of course understood, that there can be no fermentation without producing alcohol.— The purest fermented wine is alcoholic, though no manufactured alcohol be added. Further, it is said by those who speak from experience that the intoxication from wine, though not so speedy as that from distilled liquors, continues longer; and is therefore on the whole equally pernicious. The wine-cup is a more insidious foe than the whiskey-bottle; more dangerous on account of its greater attractiveness and plausibility. If we indulge in it, we imperil body and soul, and set an example which may lead many others into the slippery path of ruin.

Still further: The wine-drinking Christian wounds the feelings of many of his brethren— weaker brethren, he may esteem them. They may not be able to convince him of the wrong-

fulness of his course. He may be confident that the Scriptures sustain him in it. But to them, wine-drinking, even temperate wine-drinking under present circumstances is a sin; their scruples are thoroughly honest; the case is precisely analogous to that of the Corinthians, to whom Paul wrote, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth." Some church members are induced by the example of others, to drink wine, although they have many conscientious misgivings about it. They thus commit sin, for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Others regarding all wine-drinking as iniquity, abstain from it themselves and are grieved with those who insist on their liberty in this matter. And in this manner trouble arises in the church. The case is exactly similar to the state of affairs at Corinth. Are the advocates of wine willing thus to wound the consciences of their weaker brethren, if so they choose to consider them? Is it not better to obey the inspired word, wherein we read that "it is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended or is made weak." Such certainly would seem to be the Christian law of love.

Once more: The advocacy of wine by professors of piety gives occasion to the enemies of religion to blaspheme. Such has been the indirect influence of Christianity, that many have become friendly to good morals, who are not friendly to evangelical religion. They feel that a regard for the welfare of the community requires them to adopt the principle of total abstinence, and when Christ and his followers are set forth as convivial wine-drinkers, they exult in their greater purity and self-denial, thus lowering the gospel in the eyes of men. The distinguishing glory of the gospel is the principle of self-denying love. And here, say they, Christ and his disciples are behind the unbelievers. Is any Christian disciple willing to furnish the occasion for such an indignity to his Master? Remember the apostolic injunction: "Let not then your good be evil spoken of;" it is surely applicable to such a doubtful good as the use of wine for a beverage.

Those who, on the contrary, are themselves given to wine, and drink sometimes to intoxication, are glad enough to find a supposed apology for their conduct in the Scriptures.—It is a perversion of the example of the temperate drinker, to be sure. It does not follow

because I drink one glass of wine that another may drink ten, or because I drink the pure liquid from my own vineyard, that he may drink drugged whiskey. Yet if I know that my moderate indulgence is sure to be used as an argument to draw others into intoxication, can I do less than to exercise the slight self-denial? An enthusiastic disciple of Christ would surely take pleasure in such self-denial, if thereby he might hope to save even one person from the vortex of dissipation and ruin.

But, it is urged, if pure wine becomes abundant in our country, in consequence of the increased cultivation of the vine, intemperance will decrease. Pure native wines will take the place of the poisonous compounds with which the country is flooded. This is at best a very doubtful experiment. From the lands of the vine we have conflicting testimony. It is certain that in many of them, intemperance prevails to an alarming degree. It has been supposed that less distilled liquor is consumed in wine-growing countries than in the United States. Recent statistics prove the contrary. In 1863 the consumption of brandy alone in Paris, was nearly 7 gallons to each inhabitant, while in 1860, the entire amount of all kinds of distilled spirits manufactured in and im-

ported into the United States, did not exceed one gallon for each inhabitant. This indicates that abundance of wine does not prevent the use of distilled liquors. Certainly the contrary cannot be proved. And even if it could be shown that wine tends to expel the stronger beverage, it will be many years ere it can be cheap and universal in this country. In the mean time, with the increased facility of procuring wine, especially if Christians favor its use, there must be an increase of intemperance. Those who have an appetite for strong drink will satisfy it, whether in the use of wine or whiskey. They are never satisfied until they reach a state of intoxication, and they can reach it by wine as well as by rum. It is only necessary that they should take a larger quantity, which they would naturally do. The immediate effects of wine-making and drinking are plainly mischievous. Is it right then for Christians to engage in it, on the theory, unsupported by evidence, that by-and-by, it will supplant the manufacture and use of drugged and distilled liquors? The way to promote temperance is not by digging wine-cellars, and inviting men to drink genuine wine instead of spurious brandy, but by persuading them to give up every intoxicating

beverage, and winning them to the Savior, through whom alone they can be preserved from temptation, and come off more than conquerors.

Learn, my brethren, in Christ's strength, for his sake and for the sake of your dying fellow-men, to "abstain from all appearance of evil." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

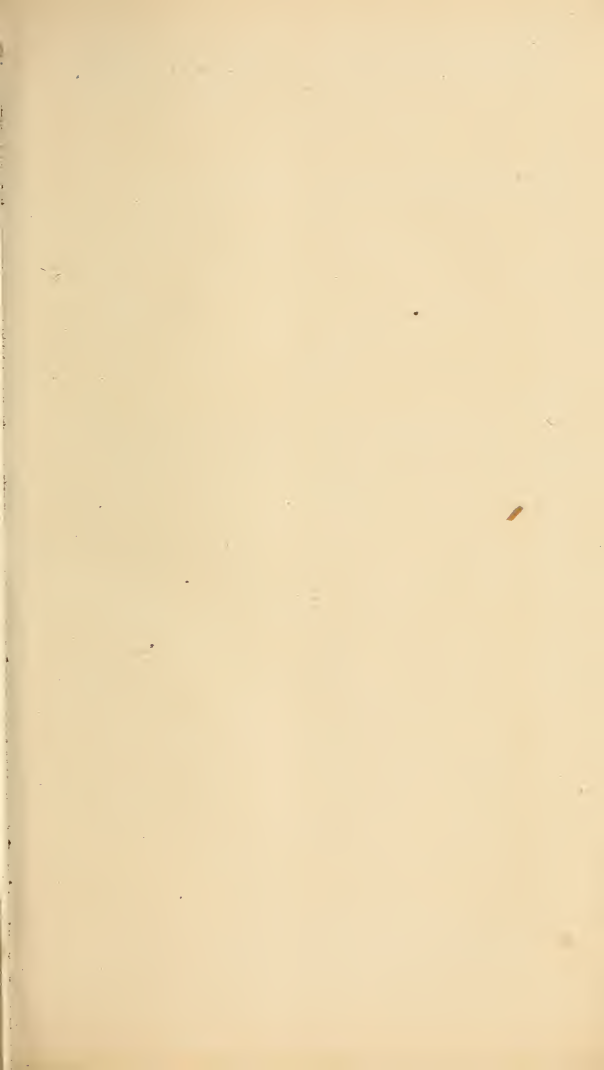
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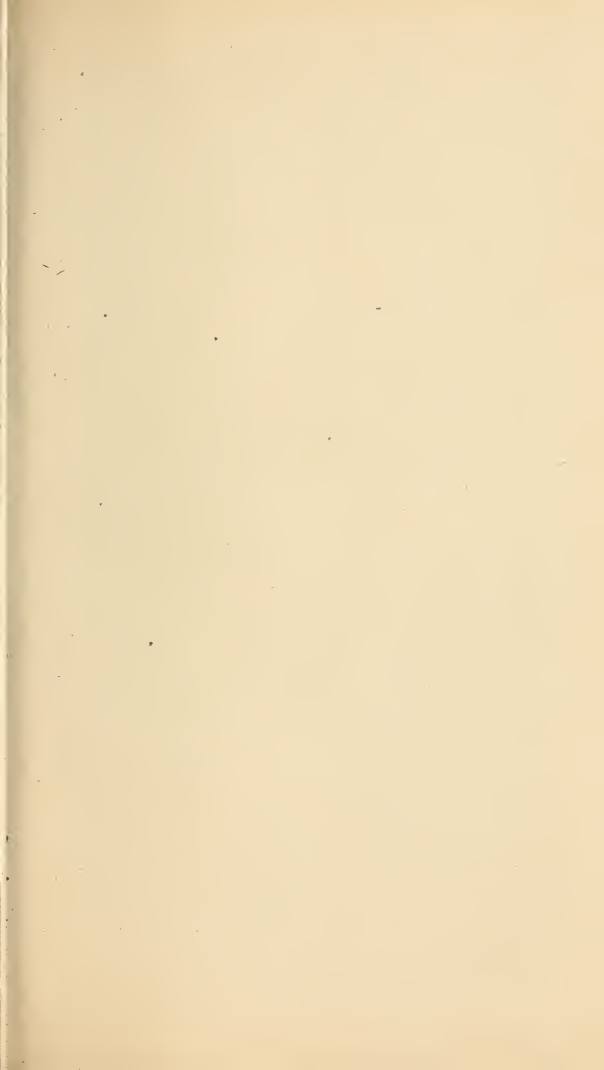
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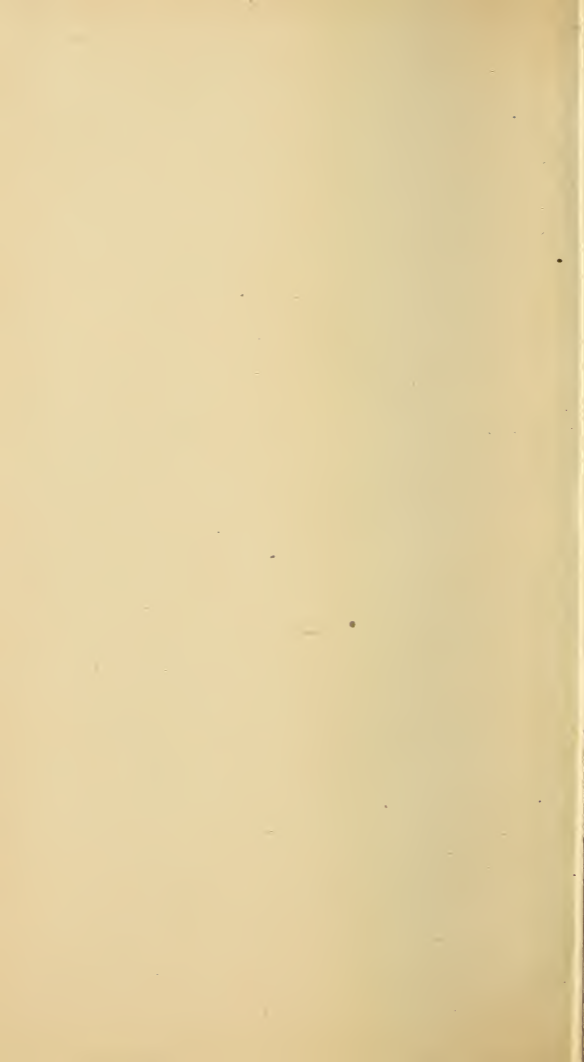
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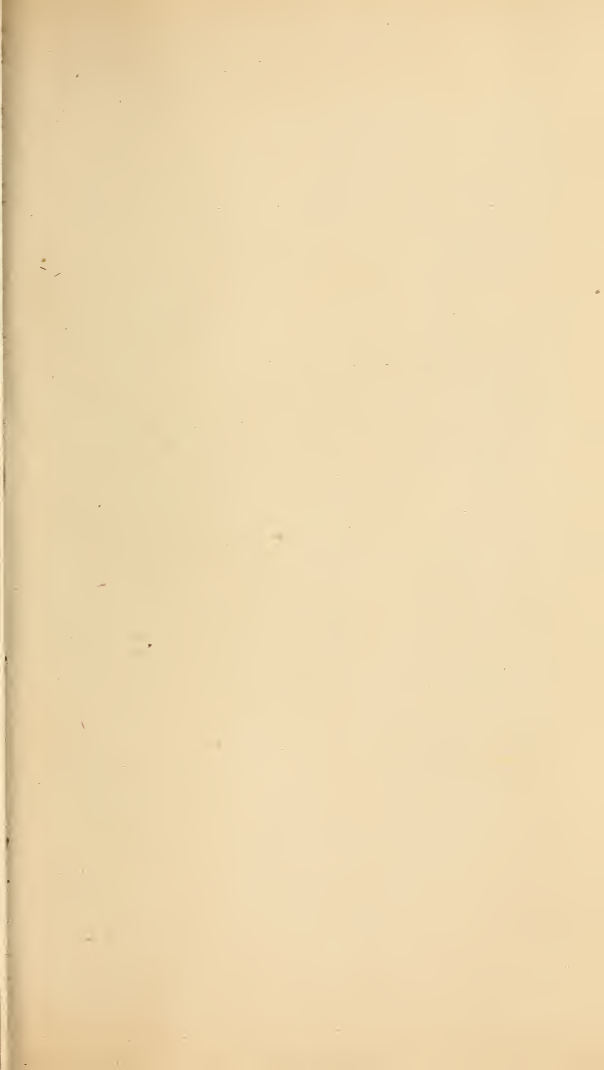
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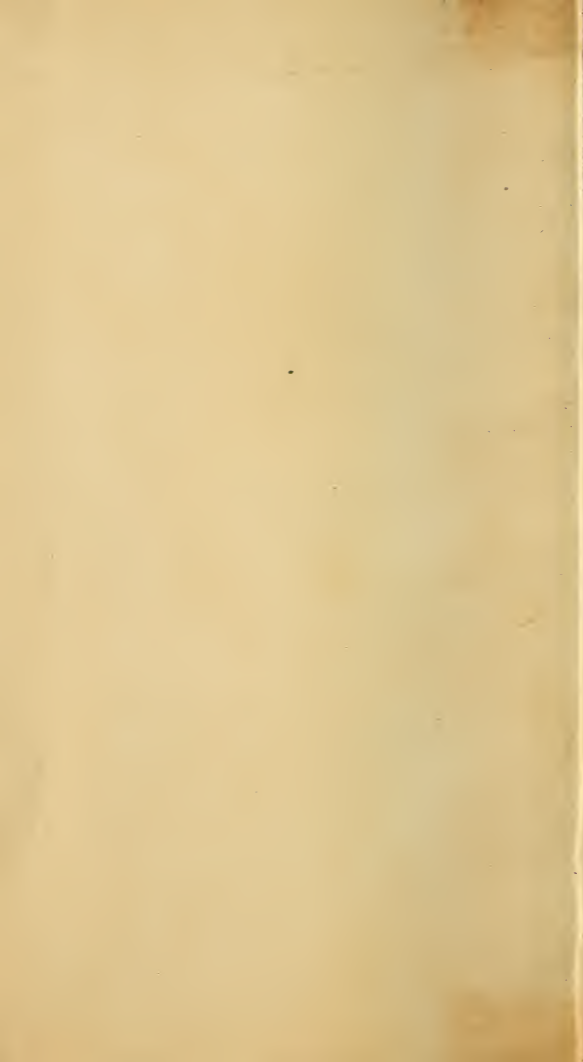


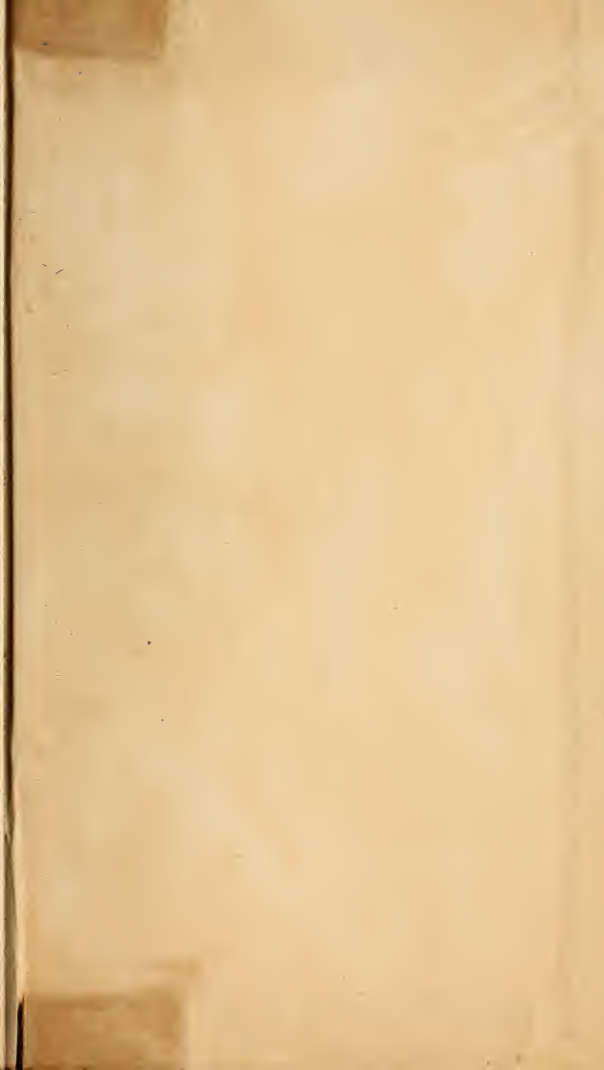












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